16.

The Duty of Subjects

REINFORC'T,

Eſpecially in the Choice of Their

Repreſentatives

To Sit in

PARLIAMENT,

IN A

LETTER to a FRIEND.

Occaſioned by His MAJESTY's Moſt Gracious Declaration in Council.

SIR,

I Have ſent you a Preſent here inclos'd; 'tis of ſmall Bulk, but of great Importance: Had ſuch a one been ſent you ſome Years ſince, when the Peoples Ears were fill'd with nothing elſe but *Popery* and *Excluſion*; and could you have had it well atteſted for Genuine and Authentick; you would have entertain'd it with a hearty Welcome.

'Tis a Copy of His Majeſty's moſt *Gracious Declaration*; a Declaration ſo Mature and Seaſonable, ſo Full and Well-adviſ'd, that we muſt not look upon it as the Crafty Artifice of a *Politick Uſurper*; nor as the violent *Extortion* of the Paſſionate and Miſtaken *Faction* that oppos'd him; but as the Natural Emanation of His *Princely Mind* and *Heroick Generoſity*, condeſcending to obviate the affected Weakneſs of ſome, and to cure that which was really ſo in others.

Herein his Majeſty has done us the Honour to own our Affection to the *Monarchy*, and our Zeal in contending for the *Government* as now eſtabliſh'd in *Church* and *State*: and he is pleas'd

pleas'd to remind us, That in his own Practice, to the utmoſt hazard of *Life* and *Fortune*, he made himſelf our *Grand Exemplar*, when he was in the Station of a *Subject*. So that his *Title* to the *Crown* by *Succeſſion*, has been rarely embelliſh'd by his *Merits*. And *This* the Gratitude of the Nation did once acknowledge.

But what is more eminently remarkable, ev'n ſince the higheſt *Providence* has cloth'd him with the *Sovereign Power*, he has prevented our Expectation, and gone before us in *proteſting* his *Pious Reſolutions*, to maintain thoſe *Intereſts* of *Religion* and *Property* which we account the *deareſt* to us.

Obſerve his own Words; where, after a moſt endearing Promiſe to follow his late Majeſty's Example in *Clemency* and *Tenderneſs to His People*, he goes on: *I have been reported to be a Man for Arbitrary Power; but that is not the onely Story has been made of me: And I ſhall make it my Endeavours to preſerve this Government both in Church and State, as it is now by Law Eſtabliſh'd. I know the Principles of the Church of* England *are for Monarchy, and the Members of it have ſhewed themſelves Good and Loyal Subjects; therefore I ſhall always take Care to Defend and Support it. I know too, That the Laws of* England *are ſufficient to make the King as Great a Monarch as I can wiſh: And as I ſhall never depart from the Juſt Rights and Prerogative of the Crown, ſo I ſhall never invade any Mans Property; I have often heretofore ventured my Life in Defence of this Nation, and I ſhall ſtill go as far as any Man in preſerving it in all its Juſt Rights and Liberties.*

His inflexible Juſtice, with the rare Complexion of his other Princely Vertues, have worthily been admir'd with equal Love and Reverence; and theſe have hitherto been the Support of our *Juſt Confidence:* But now he has vouchſafed to give us his *Royal Word*, which flowing from a Voluntary Inclination to be Gracious, has hitherto had the *Honour* to be eſteem'd *Inviolable and Sacred.* We find that the moſt plauſible Pretences of Jealouſie, in Men of honeſt Minds, do vaniſh into Dream and meer Deluſion; and we cannot but in reaſon acquieſce in ſuch Aſſurance, with the Joy of a full and hearty *Satisfaction.*

We know the *Suggeſtions* of *Deſigners* had rais'd a Prejudice ſo ſtrong in ſome Credulous and Well-meaning Perſons, that they grew too obſtinate to be driv'n to their Duty; but we doubt not ſuch Encouragements as have been freely heap'd upon them, will in a little time melt the moſt Obdurate, and

make

make them grow ſo tractable, as to be won, and eaſily led by the *Attractive* of ſuch Great and Wiſe *Examples*.

In ſhort, We ſee, Sir, that the God of Peace and Order has been pleas'd to decide the *great Point* of *Succeſſion* by his own good *Providence*, according to his own *ſtanding Law* and *Ordinance*: Herein, he never call'd upon his *Royal Highneſs* to enter a Caution for his *Good Behaviour*, which ſeems to be a ſufficient Baffle to the Wit and Malice of all *fierce Excluders*.

His *Royal Highneſs* has not been very forward to declare himſelf in the matter of this *Debate*, and his *Reſervedneſs* has been made a *Riddle*, and ſubject to as many *Readings* and *Deſcants*, as Mens Fancy or Humour can invent.

I ſhall only obſerve this in the Caſe. Some Men have their private *Sentiments*, which they will not generally be oblig'd to account for: thô ſuch Men be ſingular in their Carriage, yet their *Deſign* may be very innocent, and free from miſchief.

That the *Proteſtant Party* is of ſome moment in ſwaying the Ballance of *Chriſtendom*, is no Secret; and if the *Church of England* be of any advantage to His *Majeſty* herein, as no doubt it is (when Matters are duely weigh'd) we may be confident, he will not part with an Intereſt of that Importance for Nothing: Beſides, his great Experience tells him, that the Gates of Hell ſtand in the way to *Rome*, as well as to *Churches* of another *Denomination*; and 'tis not a *blind Fate* that can ſecure us from the Danger that threatens us from thence, but our own *Diligence*, and a prudent *Conduct* in the Duties of a *Chriſtian Converſation*. And we may take it for an infallible Maxim, That his *Magnanimity*, and the ſenſe of his own *Greatneſs*, will never ſuffer him to ſink ſo low, as to become a *Vaſſal* to his *Holineſs*, as their *Canon-Law* does make him.

What Meaſures the *Diſſenters* intend to take, we ſhall underſtand more certainly by their *enſuing Election* of *Repreſentatives*; for in ſuch voluntary and equivocal *Generations*, Men commonly follow the Fancy of their own *Likeneſs*, and we may ſay of ſuch, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays of *Idols*, *They that make them are like unto them, and ſo are all ſuch as put their truſt in them.*

We are ſure, ſuch as are well affected to the *King* and *Church*, will not chuſe their *Enemies* to vote in their Concerns; they will not be guilty of ſuch a *Solœciſm* in their *Practice*: And is it probable, on the other ſide, that ſuch as have been in *actual Rebellion* againſt the *Crown*, and have made a Spoil of *all Sacred*

cred Eſtabliſhments in the *Church*, and embroyl'd their *Native Country* in a brutiſh Confuſion; is it probable that ſuch Men ſhould be fit Inſtruments to ſettle us in that Splendour and Tranquillity which ſo Ancient and Renown'd a *Monarchy* may juſtly challenge? He that reflects upon the Havock ſuch Men have lately made amongſt us, if he be well in his Wits, can ne'r believe it.

I muſt not be underſtood of ſuch as have ſeen their Errour, and retracted it; but of the hardy, and unrelenting: and you may aſſure your ſelf, ſuch whoſe Fingers are ſtill itching at *Church-Lands*, and the Revenue of the *Crown*; ſuch as can ſerve *God* by none but a *Model* of their own *conceiving*, and have Worldly Ends to ſerve by ſuch *Means*; they'll ſtill Sail as the Wind ſerves, by the ſame *Compaſs*.

Indeed the *Scheme* of their *Principles* is ſo legible in the *Commentaries* which they have put upon them by their *Practice*; and their *Hypocriſie* is ſo groſly betray'd by their Contradictions; and their *Perſons* ſo expos'd to the ſhame and ſcorn of all *Loyal* and *Honeſt Men*; that in *very* Modeſty, at leaſt for one *whole Age*, they ought to *retire* behind the *Curtain* to furniſh themſelves with new habits of *Diſguiſe*, and dreſs up their *Scenes* of *Sedition* with *freſh Pretences*, before they venture to act the *ſame Part* over a *ſecond time*.

But if their *Zeal* does ſo far out-run their *Wit* and *Policy*, that they muſt needs bring their *old Actors* upon the *Stage*, to reherſe the *Bloody Tragedy*, and keep it ſtill in memory; or if they will be *wheadling* a freſh *Set* of *Proſelytes* to eſpouſe their *Good Old Cauſe*, and ſet on their *young Cubs* to take the *Scent* of the *late Rebellion*, and *hunt* upon't *dry-foot*; there's little to be ſaid to it: 'tis an *evident Sign* that the *Republican Wheel* is ſtill in motion, and their *Myſtery of Iniquity* very earneſt at work amongſt us; and our *prudent* and *watchful Governours* are highly concern'd to have an Eye open to obſerve it.

FINIS.

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